



Somerville Federation

Somerville Primary School and Somerville Nursery School

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Executive Headteacher – Mr M J Forber

24th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I trust that you are all staying safe and really hope that everyone in your family and everyone you know has not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. I realise that this has been a difficult time for everyone but just hope that when we see you all next, whether that be in a couple of weeks' time or longer that we hear only good news. My thoughts and prayers are for all of our families to keep safe and be unaffected by this pandemic and for our children to return to school happy and well. The staff and I are really missing being at school with all of the children and I know that they really can't wait to see all of them again, if you can pass this message onto the children for me.

Childcare Provision.

In week 5 of this closure we have had around 20 children in each day at the school for childcare. Each day we have a different set of child care staff in school looking after the children including teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and senior leaders from both the Nursery School and Primary School. This week we have had more than 30 of these staff working across the five days and I am thankful for their commitment and dedication under these difficult circumstances. Putting themselves and their families at risk, including all those they have to look after in their own home, as well as their own dependent family members. Each day they come into school; their thoughts and actions to ensure that the children have a fabulous and fun packed day of activities whilst continuing to ensure that the children and themselves are safe at all times. Not an easy job but one we are thankful for as it allows our key workers to attend to those essential services to get us all through this crisis, as well as giving respite and care to our vulnerable children. Thank you to these staff and to Mr Hardman and cleaning staff who ensure that our Primary School can be open each day, safe and clean for children and adults. We continue to open to the children from 8.00am till 6.00pm to cater for the front line key workers who work long hours. As well as thanking our own staff who work these long hours including our OTIS the Owl club staff who come to support the children later in the afternoon I would just like to thank the children who have been fantastic in coming to school to allow their parents carry out these essential jobs needed at this time. Long hours for staff and long hours for the children! Well done everyone!

Working from home.

We launched our Seesaw online lessons this week for Years 1 to 6 and many of our children have been really benefiting from this. Staff have been forwarding some of the children's work to me and it has been fantastic to see just how hard they are working at home under difficult circumstances. Well done to all the children who have been able to access this resource. Please don't be upset if work is not marked. Work has been coming in at different times of the day and in different amounts so I have asked the staff to choose a subject each week to focus their marking efforts. Please remember that teaching staff as well as covering the childcare rota and completing other work from home will have their own children or members of their family to care for as well as the other difficulties that we are all experiencing.

Don't forget all of the other resources you can access from our website including BBC iPlayer which started its online and iPlayer daily lessons this week on Monday which have proved to be really beneficial <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/dailylessons> There is also the government website with over 180 age appropriate lessons on a variety of themes from the newly launched Oak Academy <https://www.thenational.academy/> I have asked staff to also direct children to lessons on this website. Those children who have been unable to access these or other online resources, we totally understand that they may not have access to the internet or a computer, or your child may have an older brother or sister who is having to complete work at the same time. Or it may even be an adult in the household needing to access the computer for work. Trying to juggle your own work and care for your child as well

as having to home school them is an almost impossible task especially when you include trying to fit in cleaning, cooking their meals, shopping and everything else. So please try not to worry you are all doing a great job under difficult circumstances. Just keep doing your best in supporting your child, you can only do what you can do.

The school website is now back up and running and this letter and others are available online if you need access to them in future.

Free School Meal Vouchers.

We have again had several difficulties for some parents claiming free school meal vouchers, however the very large majority have now received these and I have either spoken to parents on the phone or been in contact by email with those who have had difficulty in accessing their vouchers. Vouchers for this week arrived on Friday morning. Next week's voucher should arrive earlier next week as I ordered these this Tuesday at 8.45pm. Some top tips for parents and carers from my own experience and after speaking to parents are:

- Not all of the vouchers arrive in your email inbox at the same time as someone else from the two schools, yours may arrive a couple of hours later or earlier than theirs.
- Check your 'junk mail' box in case they have landed in this email inbox. I will try and update you when they arrive in inboxes so that you do not have to check every day.
- Remember to go back online before going to the supermarket with your redemption code. You need use your code to order your gift card before going to the supermarket.
- When ordering your gift card try and order it at non peak times, later in the evening is best then you will not have to wait in their virtual waiting room. They are dealing with thousands of orders.
- If a supermarket you wish to order from disappears from being available try and refresh your page a couple of times before ordering it may reappear. ASDA disappeared a couple of times for parents this week, but we know that this worked. This is because some supermarkets have not been able to cope with demand.
- When writing your email address do not incorrectly type your email address as your gift card may end up in someone else's inbox for them to use.
- If you do not redeem your code within the time allowed your code will expire and the government will reclaim the money from Edenred. I will be unable to reorder codes if your code expires and you have not claimed what is rightfully yours in time. **104 children's redemption codes from Friday have not been redeemed** as of midnight on Friday.
- If I did not have your email address originally, please bear with me whilst I order your gift cards for your supermarket as this will take a few days next week to get them ordered and distributed.
- I have tried to help as many parents this week as I could by email and by phone with their FSM voucher claims however I am hoping by next week you will all be in a routine. I will soon be passing the ordering of FSM vouchers and issues to another member of staff so that I can continue to carry out the work as headteacher of our two schools. I have also attached an FAQ sheet which may help if you have any questions or queries.



FAQ on FSM
vouchers.pdf

228 children are now set up to receive FSM vouchers by email from Edenred from the week of 4th May. Other arrangements are in place for two children's parents who did not have access to the internet.

Please remember that if your circumstances have recently changed or you did not realise that your child was not registered for free school meals please click on this link <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/> and apply for free school meals for your child. We will then get vouchers out to you as soon as this is possible.

With regards, continue to keep safe everyone and look after yourselves as well as each other.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M J Forber'.

Mr M J Forber
Executive Headteacher